

What is claimed is:

1 1. An interface for coupling an input device to a
2 first surgical apparatus and a second surgical
3 apparatus, comprising:

4 an interface that has a first input channel
5 coupled to the input device, a first output channel
6 coupled to the first surgical apparatus and a second
7 output channel coupled to the second surgical
8 apparatus, said interface having a select channel that
9 switches said first input channel between said first
10 output channel and said second output channel.

1 2. The interface as recited in claim 1, wherein
2 said interface includes a multiplexor.

1 3. The interface as recited in claim 1, further
2 comprising a speech interface which receives commands
3 from a surgeon and provides command signals to said
4 select channel.

1 4. The interface as recited in claim 3, further
2 comprising a central processing unit which is coupled
3 to said speech interface and said select channel.

1 5. A surgical system, comprising:
2 a first surgical apparatus;
3 a second surgical apparatus;
4 an input device which provides a control signal to
5 said first surgical apparatus or said second surgical
6 apparatus; and,
7 an interface that has a first input channel
8 coupled to said input device, a first output channel
9 coupled to said first surgical apparatus and a second
10 output channel coupled to said second surgical
11 apparatus, said interface having a select channel that
12 switches said first input channel between said first
13 output channel and said second output channel.

1 6. The surgical system as recited in claim 5,
2 wherein said input device is a foot pedal.

1 7. The surgical system as recited in claim 6,
2 wherein said foot pedal is coupled to said select
3 channel of said interface.

1 8. The surgical system as recited in claim 5,
2 wherein said input device is a speech interface.

1 9. The surgical system as recited in claim 8,
2 further comprising a speech interface that is coupled
3 to said select channel of said interface.

1 10. The surgical system as recited in claim 5,
2 wherein said first surgical apparatus is an
3 electrocautery device.

1 11. The surgical system as recited in claim 5,
2 wherein said first surgical apparatus is a robotic arm.

1 12. The surgical system as recited in claim 5,
2 wherein said first surgical apparatus is a laser.

1 13. The surgical system as recited in claim 5,
2 wherein said first surgical apparatus is an operating
3 table.

1 14. The surgical system as recited in claim 10,
2 wherein said second surgical apparatus is a robotic
3 arm.

1 15. The surgical system as recited in claim 14,
2 wherein said input device is a foot pedal.

1 16. The surgical system as recited in claim 15,
2 further comprising a speech interface that is coupled
3 to said select channel of said interface.

1 17. The surgical system as recited in claim 16,
2 further comprising an operating table that is coupled
3 to a third output channel of said interface.

1 18. The surgical system as recited in claim 17,
2 further comprising a laser that is coupled to a fourth
3 output channel of said interface.

1 19. A method for operating a first surgical
2 apparatus and a second surgical apparatus from a input
3 device, comprising the steps of:

4 a) providing interface that has a first input
5 channel coupled to the input device, a first output
6 channel coupled to the first surgical apparatus and a
7 second output channel coupled to the second surgical
8 apparatus;

9 b) switching said interface so that said first
10 input channel is coupled to said first output channel;
11 and,

12 c) switching said interface so that said first
13 input channel is coupled to said second output channel.

1 20. The method as recited in claim 19, wherein
2 said interface is switched with a command signal from a
3 speech interface.